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A Self-Compassion Intervention to Increase Feedback Acceptance among Individuals with Perfectionistic Tendencies

Alise Sue Ellen Kottman

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**A SELF-COMPASSION INTERVENTION TO INCREASE FEEDBACK
ACCEPTANCE AMONG INDIVIDUALS WITH PERFECTIONISTIC
TENDENCIES**

A Master's Thesis

Presented to

The Graduate College of

Missouri State University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science, Psychology

By

Alise Kottman

May 2017

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**A SELF-COMPASSION INTERVENTION TO INCREASE FEEDBACK
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Psychology

Missouri State University, May 2017

Master of Science

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ABSTRACT

Performance feedback is an important part of employee development. Performance feedback is often administered incorrectly which can be damaging to the employee. Self-compassion training is proposed as a means to mitigate the negative effects associated with receiving damaging performance feedback. Self-compassion priming was used as a method to increase feedback acceptance among individuals with perfectionistic tendencies. Participants ($n = 938$) were given a measure of perfectionism and then asked to complete a proofreading task containing either a self-compassion prime or a neutral topic. Positive and negative feedback was randomly assigned. Participants then filled out an internal self-compassion measure as well as a feedback acceptance measure. A moderated moderation analysis was conducted to determine if self-compassion priming increased the level of self-compassion among individuals with perfectionistic tendencies and, thus, increased feedback acceptance. No significant effects were found for self-compassion priming as a moderator. However, reported self-compassion level was approaching significance as a moderator in increasing negative feedback acceptance. Findings suggest that future research could focus on a long term self-compassion training intervention as a means to increase feedback acceptance among individuals with perfectionistic tendencies.

KEYWORDS: perfectionism, self-compassion, feedback acceptance, priming, MTURK

This abstract is approved as to form and content

Michelle Visio, PhD
Chairperson, Advisory Committee

Missouri State University

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INTRODUCTION

Performance feedback is important to job-related behavior change (Burke, Davis, & Flett, 2008). Moreover, performance feedback is most effective when given in a specific and timely manner (Kluger & DiNisi, 1996). How people react to feedback varies as a function of many factors including the personality of the recipient and valence of the feedback. Furthermore, feedback acceptance can be highly difficult to achieve when the feedback valence is negative (Anderson & Jones, 2000). Providing feedback that is accepted and used by the employee is always a challenge for managers. However, when considering feedback and perfectionism the level of challenge is enhanced.

Perfectionism, in relation to feedback acceptance, has attracted little to no research attention. People with perfectionistic tendencies can be extraordinarily critical of both themselves and others (Frost, Marten, Lahart, & Rosenblate, 1990). For that reason, it is hypothesized that people with perfectionistic tendencies, in particular, may have an especially difficult time accepting and internalizing feedback. One factor that is proposed to remedy the problem with feedback acceptance among individuals with perfectionistic tendencies is self-compassion training. Although elevated self-compassion has been noted to increase several positive attributes among its users, including self-esteem, positive affect, and optimism (Neff, 2003), there has been no direct research on its effectiveness on either perfectionism or feedback acceptance. The purpose of this study is to explore the joint effects of an intervention using perfectionism and self-compassion priming on both positive and negative reactions to performance feedback.

This literature review will present the following: Feedback and feedback acceptance will be reviewed; Perfectionistic tendencies will be defined and considered as they relate to types of performance feedback and reactions to it; and Self-compassion will also be considered for its role in performance feedback acceptance.

Feedback and Feedback Acceptance

Performance feedback is conceptualized as “information provided by an agent (e.g., teacher, peer, book, parent, self, experience) regarding aspects of one’s performance or understanding” (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). When administered inappropriately, feedback can be harmful (Pearce & Porter 1986). Because feedback is a ubiquitous aspect of organizations, it is important to both study and attempt to improve it. By improving feedback, one can hope to increase feedback acceptance, which supports employee improvement (Ilgen, Fisher, & Taylor, 1979).

Feedback acceptance has been defined as a person’s beliefs that the feedback they have received is accurate (Ilgen et al., 1979). It has been found that feedback acceptance plays a major role in employees’ response to feedback, their beliefs in regard to its accuracy, and any behavior change associated with it (Ilgen, et al., 1979).

Feedback has been identified as a multidimensional construct consisting of accuracy of the feedback, specificity of the feedback, self-awareness, fairness, clarity of the feedback, and intent to use the feedback (Anderson & Jones, 2000). Attitudes toward feedback are also important to feedback acceptance. Negative feedback is not likely to prove fruitful in aiding employee change if recipients are defensive about it (DeNisi & Kluger, 2000). Feedback is more likely to be accepted by the ratee and elicit change if the

person perceives that there is a need for improvement and is interested in making improvements (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). There are several factors that can affect feedback acceptance by employees, including valence of the feedback, perceived fairness of the feedback and individual differences, including perfectionism.

Arguably the most important element of feedback affecting recipient's reactions to and acceptance of, would be valence (Ilgen et al., 1979). Moreover, valence of the feedback can also be crucial to feedback acceptance (Landy & Farr, 1983). That is, individuals who receive negative feedback are less likely to accept it than those who receive positive feedback (Anderson & Jones, 2000). The receipt of negative feedback has also been shown to positively correlate with retaliation behaviors, motivation, alienation, and demoralization (DeNesi, Randolph, & Blencoe, 1980; Meyer, Kay, & French, 1965; Meyer, 1975). Lastly, negative feedback is often denied by its recipients due to an unwillingness to accept such information as truth, which stems from ego defense mechanisms (Ilgen, et al., 1979). Accordingly, positive feedback has been linked to a number of favorable outcomes. Positive feedback is more readily recalled, recalled more accurately, and is perceived as more accurate than negative feedback (Ilgen, 1971). That is because positive feedback is not damaging to the ego, and thus, individuals are more likely to accept it. Although feedback valence is an important issue in feedback acceptance, self-concept variables also play important roles.

Most of the available research on the role of individual differences on feedback acceptance has focused on self-efficacy and self-esteem (Linderbaum and Levy, 2010). Of the many factors that influence responses to feedback, self-concept variables are perhaps the most relevant to both response to the feedback and perfectionism. In

particular, core self-evaluation has been shown to positively predict satisfaction after a performance evaluation and also to elicit change based on the performance evaluation (Kamer & Annen, 2010). Similarly, self-esteem has moderated the relationship between negative feedback and reactions to feedback (Ilgen, Fisher, & Taylor, 2007). It has also been demonstrated that the relationship between source credibility and acceptance of feedback was moderated by self-esteem. Specifically, people higher in self-esteem are more likely to change behaviors in response to feedback when feedback comes from anyone versus only accepting feedback from a highly respected supervisor when compared to those with lower self-esteem (Fedor, Davis, Maslyn, & Mathieson, 2001).

Other personality traits play a role in how feedback is received. For example, conscientiousness moderated the relationship between feedback sign and reactions to feedback (Anderson & Jones, 2000). That is, individuals higher in conscientiousness would be less likely to accept feedback that was negative. This is significant because many individuals with adaptive perfectionism are also high in conscientiousness. Overall, self-concept seems to play an important role in how feedback is received and even more so for perfectionists.

Perfectionism

It has been posited that up to 50% of the population has perfectionist tendencies (Adderholdt & Goldberg, 1999). For that reason, it would be advantageous to research to understand how these individuals navigate the workplace. Moreover, perfectionistic tendencies are generally focused toward school and work more frequently than other domains (Ashby, Slaney, Noble, Gnulka, & Rice, 2012). Being that feedback is an ever-

present aspect of organizations, it is important to understand how perfectionism affects responses to feedback and what can be done to mitigate these reactions if necessary.

Perfectionism has been defined in a number of ways by different researchers. Hamcheck (1978) found perfectionism to be either normal or neurotic. Neurotic perfectionism is associated with a higher levels of worry and self-doubt, higher stress levels, a more internalized negative view of perfectionism, and higher levels of negative self-judgments than normal perfectionism. Normal perfectionism is also associated with these factors, however, to a significantly lower degree than neurotic perfectionism. Neurotic perfectionism is also equated to being maladaptive where as normal perfectionism is equated to being more adaptive. Frost et al. (1990) defined perfectionism as the setting of excessively high standards accompanied by over critical self-evaluation. They found perfectionism to be multi-dimensional and consist of the following categories: the setting of excessively high personal standards, having a high level of concern over making mistakes, frequent experience of self-doubt about the quality of one's work, placing a high value on parent's expectations, and a strong preference for organization, order, and precision. Hewett and Flett (1991) described perfectionism as being other-oriented, self-oriented, and socially prescribed. Other-oriented perfectionists have excessively high standards for significant others, place importance on others being perfect, and stringently evaluate them. Self-oriented perfectionism involves self-directed criticism and excessive evaluation. Socially prescribed perfectionists feel that others have unrealistic standards for them and evaluate them harshly. Slaney and Johnson (1992) separated perfectionism into adaptive and maladaptive categories. Adaptive perfectionists are concerned with striving for achievement while maladaptive perfectionists are

concerned with being negatively evaluated. Finally, Slaney, Rice, Mobley, Trippi, and Ashby (2001) analyzed several previously created perfectionism scales to create the “Almost Perfect” scale. Slaney et al. (2001) found perfectionism to be a multidimensional construct consisting of three facets: high standards, order, and discrepancy. High standards is characterized by the setting of excessively high standards for one’s self, order is characterized by a preference for neatness and organization, and discrepancy refers to the discrepancy between one's standard's and their actual performance (Slaney et al., 2001). Although there are several conceptions of perfectionism, modern research recognizes it as a bipolar factor ranging from adaptive to maladaptive, regardless of how it is conceptualized (Slaney et al., 2001).

Perfectionism and the Workplace

Research regarding perfectionism and the work place is somewhat limited, but has been linked to a number of outcomes. Perfectionism is positively correlated with depression, burnout, work-family conflict, stress, and negatively related to engagement, psychological well-being life satisfaction, and work- related adjustment (Burke, 1999; Chang, 2000; Childs & Stoeber, 2010; D’Souza, Egan, & Rees, 2011; Mitchelson & Burns, 1998; Mor, Day, Flett, & Hewitt, 1995). Perfectionism is also positively correlated with workaholism and an inability to delegate work to others while it is negatively correlated with job satisfaction, mental health, physical health, self-esteem, and performance (Burke et al., 2008; Burns, 1980; Fry, 1995). In addition, perfectionism predicts recognition-seeking, wanting others’ approval, and fear of negative evaluation (Hewitt & Flett, 1991; Stolz & Ashby, 2007). Individuals who are high in perfectionism

may come to overextend themselves in an on-going attempt to meet their unattainable standards (Wolpin, Burke, & Greenglass, 1991). Lastly, perfectionism has been linked to lower income in insurance agents. It was found that individuals high in perfectionism earned an average of \$15,000 a year less than those low in perfectionism (Burns, 1980).

In regard to group works, perfectionism is positively correlated with taking charge (Stolz & Ashby, 2007). This can be a good thing when group processes are ambiguous and leader emergence is necessary. In contrast, research has also indicated that perfectionism may hinder group processes in that it is positively correlated with competitiveness and aggressiveness which may undermine group processes (Besser, Flett, & Hewitt, 2004). It can also be asserted that these attributes can reduce group cohesion by decreasing interpersonal liking. Moreover, individuals high in perfectionistic tendencies have a low tolerance of other's mistakes and events not going as planned (Stolz et al., 2007). It can also be asserted that these attributes too can reduce interpersonal liking and, thus, group cohesion. Therefore, having individuals with perfectionistic tendencies participate in group work may be more of a detriment than an advantage.

Although there are many negative outcomes associated with perfectionism, some positive outcomes have been identified as well. Many organizations consider perfectionism to be a corporate asset in that it is associated with high standards, efficiency, and achievement (MacDonald, 2011; Peters-Atkinson, 2012). Perfectionistic striving was positively correlated with self-efficacy and aspiration level (Blackler, 2011). High levels of cognitive ability have been associated with high scores on perfectionism measures (Parker, 1997). Perfectionism is positively correlated with achievement

tendencies, achievement motivation, conscientiousness (Accordino, Accordino, & Slaney, 2000; Hewitt & Flett, 1991; Hill et al., 1997). This is a positive attribute of perfectionism due to conscientiousness being negatively correlated with work family conflict and various other favorable outcomes (Bruck & Allen, 2003; Wayne et al., 2004). Adaptive perfectionism is positively correlated with high self-esteem, higher exam performance, life satisfaction, positive affect, endurance, extroversion (Bieling, Israeli, Smith, & Antony, 2003; Chang, Watkins, & Banks, 2004; Grzegorek, Slaney, Franze, & Rice, 2004; Parker & Stumpf, 1995; Rice & Slaney, 2002). Setting high standards, an aspect of perfectionism, is positively related to well-being (Ozbilir, Day, & Catano, 2015). It seems as though a moderate level of perfectionism may be helpful in some circumstances by enhancing self-esteem and conscientiousness via achievement striving, motivation, etc.

Overall, perfectionism is an enduring issue that many individuals may face in the workplace. Although there are instances where modest amounts of perfectionism have led to favorable outcomes, there are also several instances of perfectionism leading to unfavorable outcomes. Many unfavorable outcomes associated with perfectionism can be costly, both to the individual as well as the organization. Negatively health-related outcomes and inability to work in group settings can undermine workplace processes and be costly for the organization. Negative health outcomes, as well as the finding that maladaptive perfectionists make less money than non-perfectionists, can place a financial burden on the individual. With that in mind, it would be advantageous for researches, as well as organizations, to invest time into uncovering possible remedies to mitigate the negative aspects associated with perfectionism.

Feedback and perfectionism

Individuals with perfectionistic tendencies are known to set excessively high standards for themselves and evaluate themselves harshly (Hewitt & Flett, 1991). For that reason, when these individuals receive negative feedback there may be an even more severe reaction than that of non-perfectionists. It is known that perfectionists view any task and their corresponding performance as extremely important (Besser, Flett, & Hewitt, 2004). The receipt of negative feedback by individuals with perfectionistic tendencies has been shown to cause significantly more disappointment, skewed negative peer comparisons, negative affect, and decreased perceptions of competence than negative feedback received by non-perfectionists (Besser et al., 2004; Blackler, 2011). In addition, for individuals high in perfectionism, number of mistakes made has been demonstrated to be positively correlated with negative affect (Besser et al., 2004). Perfectionists are also significantly more likely to experience psychological distress when confronted with failures and setbacks (such as negative feedback), than non-perfectionists (Hewitt & Flett, 1993; Hewitt et al., 1996). That could be because individuals with perfectionistic tendencies have been shown to have an increased level of rumination after negative feedback is received (Besser, et al., 2004). Increased rumination leads to increased negative affectivity and, thus, psychological distress (Soo & Sherman, 2015). Individuals high in perfectionistic tendencies have shown increased difficulty recovering from mistakes (Meyers, Cooke, Cullen, & Liles, 1979). Blackler (2011) found that perfectionists given two tasks, procrastinated longer on the second task after receiving negative feedback on the first task than individuals who received positive feedback on the first task. Moreover, some individuals high in perfectionism who received negative

feedback on the first task even gave up before the second task (Blackler, 2011). This is best explained by the perfectionist's inability to recover from failures as previously mentioned. It is also believed that maladaptive perfectionists internalize negative feedback where adaptive perfectionists do not (Blackler, 2011). Perfectionistic self-criticism is negatively correlated with self-efficacy and predicts decreased self-efficacy following receipt of negative feedback (Stoeber, Hutchfield, & Wood, 2008). These findings also provide an explanation for procrastination and quitting behaviors by perfectionists after receiving negative feedback. Additionally, in the absence of clear or frequent feedback, individuals high in perfectionism may evaluate their performance negatively, which can result in lower levels of work related adjustment (Mor, Day, Flett, & Hewitt, 1995). Lastly, ambiguous feedback given to perfectionists can also be interpreted as negative because individuals high in perfectionism expect the absolute best performance and ambiguous feedback does not convey the message that they have performed the best (Nepon, Flett, Hewitt, & Molnar, 2011). Although there are several individual attributes that can undermine feedback acceptance by perfectionists, the social disconnection model can provide a framework by which some of these issues may operate (Hewitt, Flett, Sherry, & Caelian, 2006).

It is also important to examine the perfectionism social disconnection model (Hewitt et al., 2006). This model provides a framework for explaining the relationship between perfectionism and psychological distress. This model posits that people with high levels of perfectionism possess a heightened sensitivity and disposition to react negatively to negative feedback (Nepon et al., 2011). Perfectionism, coupled with the propensity for rumination following negative feedback, was found to lead to increased

psychological distress (Nepon et al., 2011). In line with this research, there is also a negative association between perfectionism and perceived social support (Sherry, Law, Hewitt, Flett, & Besser, 2008). People with high levels of perfectionism also report more negative social interactions than those low in perfectionism (Flett, Hewitt, Garshowitz, & Martin, 1997). That is, perfectionists may feel particularly isolated after the receipt of negative feedback due to feelings of failure and thus, perceived social isolation may occur. Individuals high in perfectionism also have a highly negative view of themselves that can lead to the belief that others are reacting more negatively to them than they actually are (Hewitt et al., 2003). The social disconnection model provides a framework depicting how many perfectionistic thought patterns operate. It can be noted that perfectionists may have a particularly hard time at work due to the perceived lack of inclusion and social support; however, many of their tendencies make remedying this problem difficult.

When considering how to aid individuals with perfectionistic tendencies in feedback acceptance, a review of the literature shows several factors to be relevant. Perfectionists have demonstrated an unwillingness to lower their goals and even maintain their excessively high standards when their own performance is repeatedly less than satisfactory (Bieling et al., 2003). Perfectionists place an increased importance on task performance and their conceptualization of this performance involves an irrational sense of importance (Ellis, 2002). Adaptive perfectionism has been shown to positively correlate with pride following success; whereas, maladaptive perfectionism was shown to negatively correlate with pride following success (Stoeber, Kempe, & Keogh, 2008). That is because maladaptive perfectionists believe that other's approval is conditional;

therefore, they do not experience pride following their success. Although perfectionistic tendencies regarding feedback cause distress on the individuals they affect, it seems as though many of them are unwilling to change on their own.

Receiving and accepting feedback can be a difficult endeavor for employees but especially those high in perfectionistic tendencies. Perfectionists have demonstrated difficulty in reacting to and accepting feedback in an adaptive manner. Moreover, perfectionists seem unwilling to lower their standards upon experiencing the negative effects caused by feedback. It seems as though interventions, such as one involving self-compassion, would be a valuable avenue to explore to aid in mitigating negative reactions from feedback as well as increase feedback acceptance among perfectionists.

Self-Compassion

Self-compassion is an idea taken from Buddhism and is related to mindfulness. Self-compassion involves three essential components. These include self-kindness, mindfulness, and common humanity (Neff, 2003). Self-kindness involves the avoidance of self-judgment when failures occur and treating oneself with tenderness and acceptance. Mindfulness involves an awareness of one's present state without judgment. Finally, common humanity involves the assumption that failures and suffering are a part of being human and should not be isolating experiences (Barnard et al., 2003). Based on these definitions, self-compassion may be viewed as the opposite of self-criticism or self-doubt, which are central facets of perfectionism. For that reason, one may posit that self-compassion therapies or interventions may be a plausible way to decrease the negative aspects and consequences associated with high levels of perfectionism.

Perfectionism and Self Compassion.

Self-compassion is negatively related to the following traits: negative affect, rumination, and anxiety. All of these traits have been negatively associated with perfectionism and receipt of negative feedback (Leary et al., 2007; Neff, Rude, & Kirkpatrick, 2007; New & Vonk, 2009). A five-part study by Leary et al. (2007) found that self-compassion reduced negative feelings when participants imagined distressing social events. Self-compassion also softened negative reactions to feedback for individuals with low self-esteem, an additional negative outcome associated with perfectionism. Moreover, it was found that low-self-compassion was linked to lower self-evaluation, which is another outcome associated with perfectionism and the receipt of negative feedback. Having a self-compassionate perspective has been shown to buffer overwhelming negative emotions felt by people that occurred after experiencing negative events. Self-compassion has also been viewed as an alternative to global self-esteem as it has been found to predict happiness, optimism, and positive affect (Neff et al., 2009). It has been noted that perfectionism is associated with elevated levels of depression and lower levels of self-esteem (Besser, Flett, Hewitt, & Guez, 2008; Hewitt & Flett, 1991). In addition, perfectionists tend to score higher on the softness scale, which may indicate a strategy to reduce the pain of not being appraised as perfect (Stolz, et al., 2007). Perfectionism is positively correlated with negative affect (Burns & Beck, 1978). That being said, self-compassion is negatively related to perfectionism. Those who are more accepting of themselves and their own human condition are less likely to hold themselves to unreasonably high standards and harsh judgments, thus bolstering self-esteem and

reducing instances of depression (Neff, 2003). Holding a self-compassionate attitude toward one's self is associated with a variety of beneficial psychological outcomes, such as less depression, less anxiety, less perfectionism, and greater life satisfaction (Neff, 2003).

Self-critical perfectionists tend to experience excessive concerns about making mistakes and a vague sense of doubt about the quality of their actions and decisions. Such individuals are principally achievement-oriented, in that they are most emotionally reactive to stressors that imply failure and have a heightened sensitivity to perceived criticism from others regarding their performance (Dunkley et al., 2003; Hewitt, Flett, & Ediger, 1996). It seems as though self-compassion exercises would be a feasible means to buffer the negative effects of negative feedback.

Although self-compassion is often discussed as a personality variable, it can also be developed through training or therapy. Self-compassion interventions have been found to increase not only self-compassion but also mindfulness, optimism, and self-efficacy (Smeets, Neff, Alberts, & Peters, 2014). In addition, self-compassion interventions have tended to decrease rumination (Smeets et al., 2014). Consequently, self-compassionate individuals are more accepting and experience less distress when they fail to meet their personal standards; however, self-compassion does not lead to passivity in the sense that lowers standards excessively (Neff 2003). Self-compassion seems to aid in buffering the effects of perfectionism without creating passivity.

HYPOTHESES

Maladaptive perfectionism has been found to negatively correlate with self-compassion (Neff, 2003). In addition, upon receipt of negative feedback, perfectionism has been linked to negative affectivity and rumination: whereas self-compassion has been linked to decrease rumination and positive affectivity (Besser et al., 2004; Neff et. al, 2009; Smeets et al., 2014). Moreover, feedback acceptance is positively correlated with agreeableness, which can be viewed as being similar to positive affectivity (Bell & Arthur, 2008). Self-compassion training can increase beliefs that all humans are imperfect and make mistakes (Neff, & Germer, 2013). Lastly, it is widely understood that feedback acceptance is more likely to occur when the feedback sign is positive (Anderson, & Jones, 2000). For these reasons, the following hypotheses have been proposed:

Hypothesis 1a. When given negative feedback, self-compassion priming will increase the overall level of internal self-compassion, which will moderate the relationship between perfectionism and feedback acceptance, such that feedback acceptance will be greater when primed with a self-compassion exercise than a neutral stimulus (see Figure 1).

Hypothesis 1b. When given negative feedback, the effects of self-compassion priming on feedback acceptance will be greater for those low in perfectionistic tendencies than those high in perfectionistic tendencies such that non perfectionists will have greater feedback acceptance than perfectionists.

Hypothesis 1c. When given negative feedback, feedback acceptance will be lower for those with high in perfectionistic tendencies than those low in perfectionistic tendencies when primed with a neutral stimulus.

The positive feedback condition is considered the control condition. Therefore, when given positive feedback, no differences in feedback acceptance are expected based on varying levels of perfectionism or priming condition.

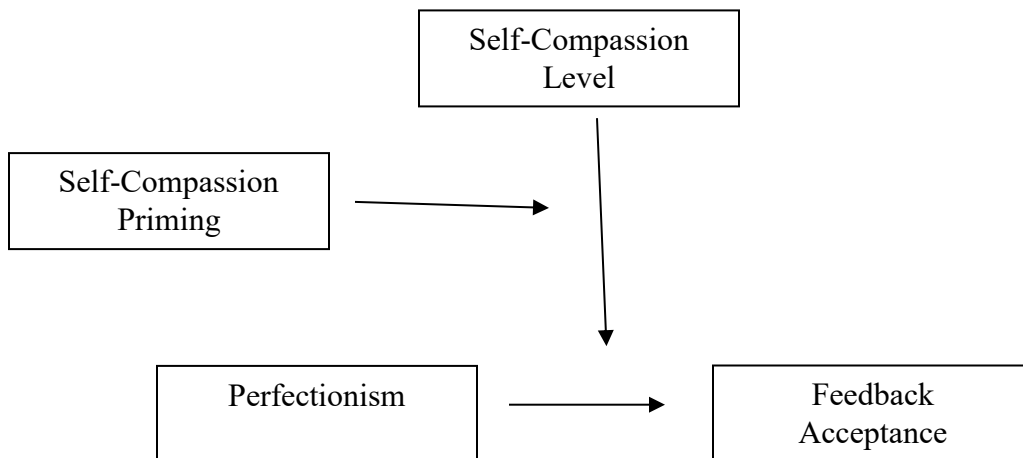


Figure 1. Diagram of Hypothesis 1a

METHOD

Participants

A participant sample ($n = 1311$) was self-selected from a pool of introductory psychology students who were recruited using SONA and received course credit ($n = 315$; 24%¹) and Amazon's Mechanical Turk ($n = 996$; 76%). MTurk participants were self-selected and were over the age of 22. The age restriction was placed on the MTURK sample in an effort to gain a sample with a more varied age range. MTURK participants were compensated 50 cents for their participation in the study. After data were cleaned a final participant sample ($n = 938$) was retained.

Descriptive statistics for the sample was as follows: There were more women ($n = 56\%$) than men ($n = 43\%$), a few participants who identified as other ($n = >1\%$), and several who chose not to identify ($n = 12\%$). Age ranged from 18 years old to 95 years ($M_{\text{age}} = 29.9$). The sample of ethnicity was made up of White ($n = 58\%$), Asian ($n = 24\%$) African American ($n = 7\%$), Hispanic, Latino, or Latinx ($n = 6\%$) American Indian or Alaskan Native ($n = 3\%$), other ($n = 1\%$), Hawaiian or Pacific Islander ($n = <1\%$), and other ($n = 1\%$). Education level was measured as being less than high school ($n = 20\%$), high school graduate ($n = 9\%$), some college ($n = 13\%$), Associate's degree ($n = 6\%$), Bachelor's degree ($n = 34\%$), Master's degree ($n = 15\%$), Doctoral degree ($n = 2\%$), and some who chose not to indicate ($n = 1\%$).

¹ The student sample was examined separately from the MTURK sample. No differences were found between the two groups.

Procedure

The experiment was conducted online using Qualtrics (Qualtrics, Provo, UT), an online survey platform. Both introductory psychology and MTURK samples participated in the same study and went through the same procedures aside from receiving the link to the study via SONA or MTURK, respectively. Participants were told the study was an examination of self-efficacy in editing papers. Participants first read an informed consent document and were required to give their consent prior to participating. Participants were then given a measure of perfectionism (Slaney et al., 2001). Participants were randomly assigned to either the control or experimental groups. Participants in the experimental group were given a proof reading task consisting of checking a short informational essay containing a self-compassion exercise for grammatical errors (see Appendix B).

Participants in the control group checked an essay with tips on how become a better student for grammatical errors (see Appendix C). The topic of how to become a better student was selected on the premise that it is a neutral topic that is self-relevant (as self-compassion is) yet would not evoke any specific strong reaction from readers. In both the control and experimental condition, a hidden timer was set for five minutes on the topic page to ensure that participants had time to read the essay before they could advance to the next page. Next, participants were randomly assigned to receive either positive or negative feedback regarding their performance on the proof reading task (see Appendix D for feedback).

Participants were then asked to fill out the feedback acceptance scale (Anderson & Jones, 2000) and the Self-Compassion Scale (Neff, 2003) as well as a single item manipulation check. Lastly, participants received a debriefing message and were thanked via an end of survey message on Qualtrics.

Experimental Prime

Both the proof reading task about self-compassion as well as the neutral topic proof reading task were designed by the experimenter. They were approximately equal in length and number of grammatical errors. See Appendix B for both proof reading tasks.

Measures

Feedback acceptance was measured using the Anderson and Jones (2000) feedback acceptance scale. This nine-item scale measured the cognitive and affective acceptance of feedback as well as intent to act on the feedback. Responses were made on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) for all of the items. A composite was made of all nine items to assess overall feedback acceptance. The internal consistency of the composite scale is shown in Table 1.

Perfectionism was measured using the Slaney et al. (2001) perfectionism scale. This scale breaks perfectionism into three categories: discrepancy, standards, and orderliness. It contains 23 items using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Items measure discrepancy between standards and performance, desire for order, and the setting of high standards. A composite scale was constructed from all 23 items to measure overall perfectionism. The internal consistency of the composite scale is reported in Table 1.

Internalized self-compassion was measured using the Self-Compassion Scale (Neff, 2003). This scale consists of 26 items using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*almost never*) to 5 (*always*). Items measure the six subscales that include self-kindness,

self-judgment, common humanity, isolation, mindfulness, and over-identification. The internal consistency coefficient for the composite scale is shown in Table 1.

The manipulation check was a single multiple choice item asking participants the topic of the essay they proof read. Participants were presented with the two topics (*A self-compassion exercise* and *How to become a better student*) along with three distractors.

All measures can be found in Appendix D.

RESULTS

Responses were compiled from both MTurk ($n = 996$) and SONA participants ($n = 315$) to create the total sample ($n = 1311$). Data were cleaned by first deleting all cases who had not responded to at least 50% of all possible items ($n = 1041$). Participants who failed the manipulation check were also deleted ($n = 951$). Next, data were screened for outliers using Mahalanobis distance values ($\chi^2(14) = 36.12$) and all multivariate outliers were deleted to create the final sample ($n = 938$). Data were screened for assumptions of normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, and homogeneity. Normality and homoscedasticity were problematic, but given that there were over 900 cases, the central limit theorem should apply. In addition, the statistical tests used in the analyses are robust to violations.

Descriptive statistics, reliabilities, skew and kurtosis were computed for all composite scales (see Table 1). Overall composite scales show high alpha coefficients as follows: perfectionism ($\alpha = .87$), feedback acceptance ($\alpha = .76$), and self-compassion ($\alpha = .93$)

Table 1

Psychometric Properties of Major Study Variables

Variable	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α	Range		Skew	Kurtosis
					Potential	Actual		
Feed Back Acceptance Total	938	3.23	0.82	0.76	1-5	1-5	-0.23	-0.66
Internalized Self-Compassion Total	938	3.01	0.64	0.93	1-5	1-5	0.04	0.57
Perfectionism Total	938	5.20	0.63	0.87	1-7	2.65-7	-0.096	0.21

Correlations were calculated for all variables split by feedback type, positive or negative, and by type of priming received (self-compassion or better student) to create a total of four groups. For individuals who received negative feedback and were primed with self-compassion, significant correlations were found between internal self-compassion and feedback acceptance ($r(219) = .22, p < .01$), internal self-compassion and perfectionism ($r(219) = -.34, p < .01$), and perfectionism and feedback acceptance ($r(219) = .13, p < .05$) (see Table 2). For individuals who received negative feedback and were primed with the neutral stimulus significant correlations were found between internal self-compassion and perfectionism ($r(241) = -.244, p < .01$), and perfectionism and feedback acceptance ($r(241) = .14, p < .05$) (see Table 3). For individuals who received positive feedback and were primed with self-compassion significant correlations were found between internal self-compassion and feedback acceptance ($r(247) = .15, p < .05$), internal self-compassion and perfectionism ($r(247) = -.34, p < .01$), and perfectionism and feedback acceptance ($r(247) = .18, p < .01$) (see Table 4). For individuals who received positive feedback and were primed with a neutral stimulus, a significant correlation was found between internal self-compassion and perfectionism ($r(231) = -.26, p < .01$) (see Table 2).

Table 2

Correlations among study variables for four groups. Group 1: Self-Compassion Prime and Negative Feedback. Group 2: Neutral Prime and Negative Feedback. Group 3: Self-Compassion Prime and Positive Feedback. Group 4: Neutral Prime and Positive Feedback.

Measure	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
1. Internal Self-Compassion with Feedback Acceptance	.22**	.08	.15*	.10
2. Internal Self-Compassion with Perfectionism	-.33**	-.24**	-.34**	-.26**
3. Feedback Acceptance with Perfectionism	.13*	.14*	.18**	.08

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Moderated Moderation Analyses

Moderation analyses were conducted using the Process plug-in for SPSS by Andrew Hayes (Hayes, 2013). A moderated moderation analysis is a model that allows you to examine three-way interactions in Process. In this study, perfectionism, self-compassion priming, and internal self-compassion were used to predict feedback acceptance (see Figure 1). The two moderators were self-compassion priming and internal self-compassion. Moderator analyses were conducted separately for participants in the negative and positive feedback conditions.

Table 3 presents the results of the moderator analysis for the negative feedback condition (Hypothesis 1a). There was no support for Hypothesis 1a, that is, prime condition and level of internal self-compassion did not moderate the relationship between perfectionism and feedback acceptance, $p = .069$. There were significant predictors of feedback acceptance in the overall model, but the coefficients “represent conditional effects and should not be interpreted as main effects and interactions as they are in a factorial ANOVA” (Hayes, 2013, p 308-309).

As expected, in the positive feedback condition, there was no moderator effect for prime and internal self-compassion between perfectionism and feedback acceptance, $p = .982$ (see Table 4).

Table 3

Moderation Analyses for the effects of internal self-compassion on feedback acceptance and perfectionism for negative feedback

	Coeff.	SE	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Self-Compassion	0.22	0.05	4.42	<.001
Perfectionism	0.21	0.06	3.66	.003
Perfectionism x Self Compassion	0.21	0.08	2.55	.011
Prime	-0.17	0.06	-2.75	.006
Perfectionism x Prime	-0.04	0.11	-0.33	.739
Self Compassion x Prime	-0.14	0.10	-1.38	.168
Perfectionism x Self Compassion x Prime	0.29	0.16	1.82	.069

$$R^2 = 0.107, MSE = 0.387$$

$$F(7, 452) = 5.708, p < .001$$

Note. Prime coded 1 = self-compassion and 2 = better student.

Table 4

Control Condition: Moderation analyses for the effects of internal self-compassion on feedback acceptance and perfectionism for positive feedback

	Coeff.	SE	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Self-Compassion	0.16	0.04	4.0	<.001
Perfectionism	0.16	0.04	3.81	<.001
Perfectionism x Self Compassion	0.13	0.07	1.88	.061
Prime	0.05	0.05	0.91	.364
Perfectionism x Prime	-0.15	0.09	-1.74	.083
Self Compassion x Prime	-0.06	0.08	-0.67	.505
Perfectionism x Self Compassion x Prime	0.00	0.14	0.02	.982

$$R^2 = 0.068, MSE = 0.270$$

$$F(7, 470) = 3.660, p < .001$$

Note. Prime coded 1 = self-compassion and 2 = better student.

Comparison of Means

An independent samples t-test was conducted to determine if self-compassion priming increased internal self-compassion between priming and non-priming conditions ($M_{self-compassion} = 2.96, SD = 0.65; M_{better-student} = 3.05, SD = .62$). A significant difference was found between self-compassion priming and internal self-compassion ($t(936) = -2.29, p = .02, d = 0.14$). Contrary to my hypothesis, participants primed with the neutral prime reported higher internal self-compassion than the participants primed with self-compassion. However, the effect size was very small.

A second independent samples t-test was conducted to determine if non perfectionists who received negative feedback and were primed with self-compassion had greater feedback acceptance than perfectionists. In contrast to hypothesis 1b, there was no significant difference in feedback acceptance among individuals high in perfectionism ($M = 2.78, SD = .66$) versus low in perfectionism ($M = 2.71, SD = .59$) when primed with self-compassion ($t(217) = 0.72, p = .47, d = 0.11$). Also in contrast to hypothesis 1c, individuals high in perfectionism ($M = 2.65, SD = .70$) had greater feedback acceptance than those low in perfectionism ($M = 2.44, SD = .06$) when primed with a neutral stimulus ($t(239) = 2.40, p = .02, d = 0.32$).

Post Hoc Analyses

Post hoc power analyses were conducted using G*Power to determine the sample size needed for moderation analyses with the desired effect size, α level, power, and number of predictors/moderators. Guidelines for effect size were taken from Cohen (1988) conventions indicating small ($r^2 = .02$), moderate ($r^2 = .15$), and large ($r^2 = .35$)

effect sizes. To achieve a moderate effect $r^2 = .15$, $\alpha = .05$, and power of .80, a sample size of $n = 426$ would be required. The current sample size ($n = 938$) was more than adequate to achieve the power needed to find an effect.

DISCUSSION

The intention of this study was to investigate the moderating effects of self-compassion on perfectionism and feedback acceptance. Self-compassion priming was used as a way to increase participant's level of internal self-compassion, which was purported to increase feedback acceptance among perfectionists. Level of internal self-compassion was examined as a moderator proposed to increase the strength of the feedback acceptance among individuals with perfectionistic tendencies. Mean level of feedback acceptance was also examined between individuals who were primed with self-compassion of a neutral stimulus. Finally, post-hoc analyses were used to determine if adequate power was achieved.

As revealed by the comparison of means analyses, the self-compassion priming was not significantly effective at increasing the levels of internal self-compassion between groups who were primed versus not primed. Previous research has shown that priming has not always been effective for its intended purpose in that it can evoke unintended psychological states or schemas (Gardner, Gabriel, & Lee, 1999; Nisbett, 2003; Shah & Kruglanski, 2003; Solomon, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski, 1991). Moreover, psychological processes are complex and there may often be several other moderators operating between the prime and its intended effect (Bargh, 2006). Priming can also be affected by age and level of processing (Ramponi, Richardson-Klavehn, & Gardiner, 2004). That is, older and less interested participants may not be as susceptible to priming as others. Lastly, priming can be too subtle or too short-termed to cause any intended change (De Houwer, Hermans, & Eelen, 1998). In this study several of these alternate priming effects may be at play. Namely, self-compassion is generally used as a form of

therapy or training (Neff, 2003). For that reason, simply having participants read an essay about self-compassion may have not been enough to evoke an increase in their level of internal self-compassion. Moreover, because the meaningfulness of this study may have been low to many participants, they may have not deeply processed the information in the self-compassion essay. This too may have cause a weakening in the priming effects. However, a significant correlation between internal self-compassion level and feedback acceptance was found. In line with hypotheses, if properly trained or evoked, self-compassion does have the potential to increase feedback acceptance.

Moderation analyses conducted showed no significant interactions between perfectionism, internal self-compassion, and feedback acceptance. As previously mentioned it was found that the priming effects were not significant enough to evoke a change in internal self-compassion level. For that reason, it would be unlikely that internal self-compassion would be able to serve as a moderator between perfectionism and feedback acceptance. Theoretically, internal self-compassion has been shown to be negatively related to (Neff, 2003). Hence, self-compassion training should help to ease the negative problems that are associated with perfectionism.

Lastly, analysis revealed no difference in feedback acceptance between individuals high and low in perfectionistic tendencies when primed with self-compassion. Further analyses revealed that perfectionists had higher levels of feedback acceptance than non perfectionists when primed with a neutral stimulus. These findings contradict previous research that has shown that perfectionists have greater negative affect and less acceptance after receiving negative feedback (Besser et al., 2004; Lundh, 2004; Rizvi,

2010). The effect sizes for these findings were both small, indicating that they may have been a statistical artifact and not a true effect.

Limitations

When examining the procedures and results in this study several limitations can be found. The first limitation to be discussed is the meaningfulness of the experiment to the participants. Based on the sample of MTurk and introductory psychology students many participants may have rushed through the study to get credit without carefully considering each question and how they would respond to it. This can lead to poor results that can bias the data, a possible occurrence in this particular study.

Another possible limitation in this study involved the magnitude of positivity or negativity of the feedback. Previous research using a feedback manipulation choose to give feedback that was slightly negative or slightly positive (Besser et al., 2004; Nease, Mudgett, & Quiñones, 1999; Sargeant, Mann, Sinclair, Van der Vleuten, & Metsemakers, 2008). The feedback manipulation used in this study (see Appendix D) was highly negative or highly positive. Because of this, it may have been more difficult for individuals receiving negative feedback to accept it. In turn, they may have found it decidedly more difficult to accept this extremely negative feedback even with receiving the self-compassion prime.

Quality of the sample is another limitation to consider. Introductory to psychology participants were used for a portion of the sample. Past research has shown that convenience samples cannot always provide external generalizability to the target population (Sackett & Larson, 1990). In addition, the remaining participants in the

sample were drawn from Amazon's Mechanical Turk. Although MTurk participants are more representative than introductory to psychology of the target population they too may have certain characteristics that make them different in meaningful ways. This, too, could reduce the external validity of the results.

Also, a final limitation in studies involving priming is the effectiveness of the prime. Many studies have used self-compassion as an intervention or type of therapy (Neff, 2003; Neff & Germer, 2013). Simply giving the self-compassion exercise as a proofreading task may have not been a strong enough manipulation to actually alter the level of participants' internal self-compassion. As discussed above, several other limitations may have affected the strength and effectiveness of the prime which may have limited the results of this study.

Future Directions

No significant evidence was found to support any of the three hypotheses. Moreover, to my knowledge no studies have tested the effects of self-compassion on feedback acceptance. For those reasons there is much work to be done in future studies. It is likely that a potential possible future direction would be to examine self-compassion training as an intervention to increase feedback acceptance among perfectionists. By using self-compassion as a training intervention, perfectionists should be able to increase their level of kindness and thus accept negative feedback more readily.

Another future direction that may be fruitful to examine would be the use of multiple organizations instead of a convenience sample. Implementing self-compassion training into multiple organizations would provide a higher level of external

generalizability. It would combine the use of an actual intervention and the use of a natural setting to maximize validity and generalizability.

Another future direction to consider would be the use of a less extreme feedback measure. Feedback provided in this study was highly negative. It would be advantageous for future studies to consider using a milder type of negative feedback. This would increase the believability and perceived accuracy of the negative feedback.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: How to Increase Self-Compassion Proof Reading Task

This is the Smith and Field Proof Reading Task. Please proofread this essay to the best of your abilities and make as many corrections as you can find. Check for grammatical errors within the text. When errors are found, manually correct them directly in the body of the text. Please do not write corrections below as the computer will interpret this as "no changes have been made" and you will receive a score of zero. Make sure to make your changes in the text. This page will allow you to advance after five minutes.

How to Increase Self Compassion

Adapted from the Smith and Field Proof Reading Task©.

The Institute for Reading and Writing Ability, 2006.

Self-compassion involves being open to and moved by ones own suffering, experiencing feelings of caring and kindness toward oneself, taking an understanding, nonjudgmental attitude toward one's inadequacies and failures, and recognizing that ones own experience is part of the common human experience (Neff, 2003). Self compassion has 3 facets: self kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness. Self kindness entails being warm and understanding toward ourselves when we suffer, fail, or feel inadequate, rather than ignoring our pain or flagellating ourselves with self-criticism. Self-compassionate people recognize that being imperfect, failing, and experiencing life

difficulties is inevitable, so they tend to be gentle with themselves when confronted with painful experiences rather than getting angry when life falls short of set ideals. Common humanity involves the understanding that all humans suffer. The very definition of being “human” means that one is mortal, vulnerable + imperfect. Therefore, self-compassion involves recognizing that suffering and personal inadequacy is part of the shared human experience - something that we all go through rather than being something that happens to “me” alone. It also means recognizing that personal thoughts, feelings and actions are impacted by “external” factors such as parenting history, culture, genetic and environmental conditions, as well as the behavior and expectations of others. Mindfulness, entails taking a balanced approach to our negative emotions so that: feelings are either suppressed nor exaggerated. This equilateral stance stems from the process of relating personal experiences to those of others who are also suffering, thus putting our Own situation into a larger perspective. It also stems from: the willingness to observe our negative thoughts and emotions with openness and clarity, so that they are held in mindful awareness. Mindfulness is a non-judgmental receptive mind state in which one observes thoughts and feelings as they are, without trying to suppress or deny them. We cannot ignore our pain and feel compassion for it at the same time. At the same time, mindfulness requires that we not be “over-identified” with thoughts and feelings. So that we are caught up and swept away by negative reactivity.

The following exercise was designed to help increase self-compassion follow along and allow yourself to contemplate each point fully deeply.

1) Think about the ways that you use self-criticism as a motivator. Is there any personal trait that you criticize yourself for having: (too overweight, too lazy, too impulsive, etc.) because you think being hard on yourself will help you change? If so, first try to get in touch with the emotional pain that your self-criticism causes, giving yourself compassion for the experience of feeling so judged.

2) Next see if you can think of a kinder more caring way to motivate yourself to make a change if needed. What language would a wise and nurturing friend + parent + teacher, or mentor use to gently point out how your behavior is unproductive, while simultaneously encouraging you to do something different. What is the most supportive message you can think of that's in line with your underlying wish to be healthy and happy?

3) Every time you catch yourself being judgmental about your unwanted trait in the future: first notice the pain of your self-judgment n give yourself compassion, then try to re frame you're inner dialogue so that it is more encouraging and supportive. Remember that if you really want to motivate yourself, love is more powerful than fear

Appendix B: How to Become a Better Student Proof Reading Task

This is the Smith and Field Proof Reading Task. Please proofread this essay to the best of your abilities and make as many corrections as you can find. Check for grammatical errors within the text. When errors are found, manually correct them directly in the body of the text. Please do not write corrections below as the computer will interpret this as "no changes have been made" and you will receive a score of zero. Make sure to make your changes in the text. This page will allow you to advance after five minutes.

How to Become a Better Student

Adapted from the Smith and Field Proof Reading Task©.

The Institute for Reading and Writing Ability, 2006.

Ever wondered why you just cant seem to reach your full academic potential? It's likely that your brain is nit the cause but, rather, your lifestyle.

Review the following steps, which outline simple changes you can make and soon you'll be on your way to becoming the student you've always wanted to become.

1. Set goals- If you set concrete goals for yourself, it's easier to become motivated and measure your success in those goals. Make sure your goals are realistic! While you should challenge your-self, you shouldn't set yourself up for failure, either. Remember: you can always set higher goals once you've achieved your first set.

2. Adopt and stick to an study schedule- Scheduling is vital to maintaining a healthy learning balance and keeping up with rigorous courses.

3. Stay well-rested- If you're awake and alert, you're certainly more likely to absorb information given in class, during study sessions and in class activities and participation, think of it as an equation: awake + alertness = A's.

4. Take advantage of educator resources

In addition to attending class, there are a variety of resources available to aid students in thriving and achieving in class. TA's, office hours and study review sessions are among the re-sources offered within specific classes. Additionally many high schools and colleges offer tutor-in sessions free of charge to students who seek extra help with their courses.

5. Healthy study techniques, for proper exam preparation- Study-techniques considered "healthy" include balance time-management and avoiding all-night study "cram" sessions.

6. Develop, note-taking skills- Listening and taking notes actively during class not only ensures the recording of accurate information but also reinforces the info through recording the information as you take it in. It's helpful to go over your notes after class and either rewrite them or outline the key information while it's still fresh in your mind. It also provides you with any important information that was only mentioned in class when it comes time to review and study the exam material.

7. Study buddy's- Collaborating with other students is a great way to learn. Students who form study groups with one another can often learn more through learning by teaching. When students explain concepts to one another, they are able to learn and absorb the

information more easily. Inversely, students that may need clarification on areas of study are able to ask peers in order to be able to better understand the course materials.

8. Take advantage of school resources- School resources are abundant and students who take advantage of such resources are much more likely to succeed. Such resources include the utilization of school libraries, career centers and school centers that provide tutoring and knowledge.

9. Take on a manageable course load- Taking on a well-balanced course load means students are more likely to succeed because of realistic expectations in the work load that can be handled successfully.

10. Attendance- This should be common sense – if students go to class, they will likely become more successful in the course. Obviously: the course material is presented during class periods and students that are paying attention tend to learn while in class and + thus + are more likely to perform well on exams.

11. Participation- Going to class is one thing but paying attention: and participating in class is another. If you listen to the lessons, questions are likely to arise. It's important to know that if you've have a question it's likely that other students have the same question as well.

Appendix C: Positive and Negative Feedback Given to Participants

Positive Feedback:

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this proof reading task. Proof reading is a valuable skill needed by everyone. After reviewing your results, a score of 47% has been found. This score is in the lowest 10th percentile of all people who have completed this task. This indicates that 90% of individuals who complete this task have received a higher score. Your score indicates that your proof reading skills are far below those of your peers.

Negative Feedback:

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this proof reading task. Proof reading is a valuable skill needed by everyone. After reviewing your results, a score of 93% has been found. This score is in the highest 90th percentile of all people who have completed this task. This indicates that 90% of individuals who complete this task have received a lower score. Your score indicates that your proof reading skills far exceed those of your peers.

Appendix D: Measures

Self-Compassion Scale and Subscales

Neff, K. D. (2003). The development and validation of a scale to measure self-compassion. *Self and identity*, 2(3), 223-250.

Self-Kindness Subscale

1. I try to be understanding and patient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like.
2. I'm kind to myself when I'm experiencing suffering.
3. When I'm going through a very hard time, I give myself the caring and tenderness I need.
4. I'm tolerant of my own flaws and inadequacies.
5. I try to be loving towards myself when I'm feeling emotional pain.

Self-Judgment Subscale

6. When I see aspects of myself that I don't like, I get down on myself.
7. When times are really difficult, I tend to be tough on myself.
8. I can be a bit cold-hearted towards myself when I'm experiencing suffering.
9. I'm disapproving and judgmental about my own flaws and inadequacies.
10. I'm intolerant and impatient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like.

Common Humanity Subscale

11. When I feel inadequate in some way, I try to remind myself that feelings of inadequacy are shared by most people.
12. I try to see my failings as part of the human condition
13. When I'm down and out, I remind myself that there are lots of other people in the world feeling like I am.
14. When things are going badly for me, I see the difficulties as part of life that everyone goes through.

Isolation Subscale

15. When I fail at something that's important to me I tend to feel alone in my failure.
16. When I think about my inadequacies it tends to make me feel more separate and cut off from the rest of the world.
17. When I'm feeling down I tend to feel like most other people are probably happier than I am.
18. When I'm really struggling I tend to feel like other people must be having an easier time of it.

Mindfulness Subscale

19. When something upsets me I try to keep my emotions in balance.
20. When I'm feeling down I try to approach my feelings with curiosity and openness.
21. When something painful happens I try to take a balanced view of the situation.
22. When I fail at something important to me I try to keep things in perspective.

Over-Identification Subscale

- 23. When something upsets me I get carried away with my feelings.
- 24. When I'm feeling down I tend to obsess and fixate on everything that's wrong.
- 25. When something painful happens I tend to blow the incident out of proportion.
- 26. When I fail at something important to me I become consumed by feelings of inadequacy.

The Almost Perfect Scale

Slaney, R. B., Rice, K. G., Mobley, M., Trippi, J., & Ashby, J. S. (2001). The revised almost perfect scale. *Measurement and evaluation in counseling and development*, 34(3),

130.

Discrepancy

1. I often feel frustrated because I can't meet my goals.
2. My best friend just never seems to be good enough for me.
3. I rarely live up to my high standards.
4. Doing my best never seems to be enough.
5. I am never satisfied with my accomplishments.
6. I often worry about not measuring up to my own expectations
7. My performance rarely measures up to my standards.
8. I am not satisfied even when I know I have done my best.
9. I am seldom able to meet my own high standards for performance.
10. I am hardly ever satisfied with my performance.
11. I hardly ever feel that what I've done is good enough.
12. I often feel disappointed after completing a task because I know I could have done better.

High Standards

13. I have high standards for my performance at work or at school.
14. If you don't expect much out of yourself you will never succeed.

- 15. I have high expectations for myself.
- 16. I set very high standards for myself.
- 17. I expect the best for myself.
- 18. I try to do my best at everything I do.
- 19. I have a strong need to strive for excellence.

Order

- 20. I am an orderly person.
- 21. Neatness is important to me.
- 22. I think things should be put away in their place.
- 23. I like to always be organized and disciplined.

Feedback Acceptance Scale

Anderson, L. & Jones, R.G. (2000). Affective, cognitive, and behavioral acceptance of feedback: Individual difference moderators. In N. Ashkanasy, C. Hartel, & W. Zerbe (Eds.), *Emotions in Organizational Life*. Westport, CT: Quorum.

Cognitive Feedback Acceptance

1. The score I received was accurate.
2. The score I received adequately captured my performance on this task.
3. It upsets me to score this poorly.

Affective Feedback Acceptance

4. I am pleased with my performance on this task.
5. Reading my test results was a positive experience.
6. I am displeased with my performance results.

Behavioral Intent to Act on Received Feedback

7. I would like to attend a workshop to improve my proof-reading skills.
8. I would like another chance to do this task.
9. I would like to learn more about test wiseness.